

# Draft Glennallen Field Office Recreation Fee Site Business Plan

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

Glennallen Field Office  
Glennallen, Alaska  
August 2022



*Tangle River Bridge adjacent to Campground Entrance Road*

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## **Draft Business Plan for BLM Glennallen Field Office Campgrounds**

### **Executive Summary**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Glennallen Field Office (GFO) prepared this recreation fee business plan pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of December 2004 (P.L. 108-477, as amended), and BLM recreation permit and fee program policy. FLREA provides the BLM the authority to charge and collect recreation fees for benefits and services provided to visitors. FLREA also authorizes the BLM to retain collected fees locally and outlines how revenues may be used and identifies specific limitations on recreation fees. Collected revenue may be expended for benefits and services such as facility repair, maintenance, enhancement, interpretation, visitor information and services, visitor needs assessments, signs, restoration, law enforcement related to public use and recreation, and operating or capital costs directly associated with the recreation fee program.

BLM Manual 2930 requires field offices to produce a business plan when establishing new fee areas and sites and developing or changing recreation fees. The business plan outlines the fee program for the identified location and thoroughly discusses and explains how fees are consistent with the criteria set forth in FLREA. Business plans assist offices in determining appropriate fee rates, outlining the costs of administering fee programs, and identifying priorities for future fee program expenditures. The plan also serves as the outreach document to provide the public with opportunities to participate in the development of or modification of recreation fees.

The GFO manages recreational campground use through issuance of Recreation Use Permits (RUP) for short-term recreation use of specialized sites, facilities, and/or services which meet the fee collection criteria established by FLREA. This business plan describes the recreation fee sites, proposed site fee changes, associated operation and maintenance costs, planned fee revenue expenditures, a financial analysis of fees charges for other similar recreation facilities, and impacts of proposed fee changes.

After careful consideration of the current fee program, the anticipated revenues and expenditures, and comparison with other regional recreation providers, the GFO proposes the following fee modifications.

- Increase the individual campsite fee at Sourdough Creek, Paxson Lake, Tangle Lakes, and Brushkana Creek campgrounds from \$12.00 to \$15.00 per night at regular sites. Walk-in sites at Sourdough Creek and Paxson Lake Campgrounds would remain at \$6 per night.
- Add a fee for the Paxson Lake Campground recreational vehicle (RV) dump station of \$10.00 for non-campers.
- Add an expanded amenity fee for reservation services across the field office

The proposed fee modifications are necessary to meet the growing expenses of the campground program, especially deferred maintenance costs stemming from the growing popularity of the GFO campgrounds as travel destinations and the associated increase in public use and increasing age of the campgrounds.

Developed fee campgrounds are a management tool used to prevent further resource damage and to provide better visitor services.

## 1. Introduction

### a. Background and Authorities

The authorities and regulations for this business plan are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended,** [Public Law 94-579] contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands and establishes outdoor recreation as one principal use of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. The BLM originally began collecting recreational fees for the use of public lands under this authority. Section 303 of FLPMA contains the BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.
- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) 2004** [Public Law 108-447] repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced the BLM's authority to collect recreational fees. The FLREA provides the BLM the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at federal recreation lands and waters that meet certain requirements. The FLREA also allows the BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they are collected and directs how the BLM will manage and utilize these revenues, including for expenses such as facility repair, maintenance and enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, services and needs assessments, signage, law enforcement directly related to public use and recreation, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program. The FLREA also established the America the Beautiful - The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass program. The FLREA is codified in the U.S. Code in Title 16 (Conservation), Chapter 87 (Sections 6801 – 6814).
- **43 CFR 2930: Permits for Recreation on Public Land.** The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is an annual codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government. Title 43 covers public lands administered by the Department of the Interior. Sections 1000 – 9999 cover the Bureau of Land Management.

This business plan has also been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Manual 2930
- BLM Recreation Permits and Fees Administration Handbook (2930-1 Handbook)

## **b. Fees and Business Plan Requirement**

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services to serve diverse outdoor recreation demands while maintaining the sustainable resource conditions needed so recreation opportunities remain available. The BLM's goals for delivering recreation benefits from BLM-administered public lands and waters to the American public and their communities are:

- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities.
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.

This business plan will assist the GFO in meeting these recreation and visitor service goals.

According to BLM Handbook 2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fees (Rel. 2-300, dated November 17, 2014), each recreation fee program must have an approved business plan that comprehensively discusses fees and how fees are consistent with the FLREA fee criteria. Business plans assist offices in determining the appropriateness and level of fees as well as the cost of administering fee programs. Plans also outline how fees will be used and provide a structured communication and marketing plan. Lastly, the plan serves as the outreach document to provide the public with opportunities to participate in the development or modification of recreation fees, including use of recreation fee revenues, and to provide the public an opportunity to comment.

This business plan meets the criteria outlined in BLM Manual 2930. The plan describes the fee sites, proposed fee changes, addition of facilities to the fee system, associated operating costs, financial analysis, and impacts of proposed fee changes. It includes analysis of data from internal BLM tracking and accounting mechanisms such as the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), Collections and Billings Systems (CBS), Federal Business Management System (FBMS), and other locally generated recreation and visitor use tracking spreadsheets. Some data contained in these systems may be subject to Privacy Act requirements. For more detailed information, contact the GFO.

The plan covers recreation fee revenues for one RV waste dump station and developed campsites at four campgrounds, all located within GFO on BLM-administered public lands in Southcentral Alaska. Under FLREA, an expanded amenity fee may be charged for the use of certain facilities or services, in this case use of sanitary dump stations and developed campgrounds that provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, the collection of the fee by an employee or agent of the federal land management agency, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities, and/or simple devices for containing a campfire. Each of the facilities covered by this plan meets the requirements for collection of expanded amenity fees. GFO uses such fees to fund campground maintenance, operations, visitor services, and construction of new campground facilities. In GFO, campground revenues are deposited in a special recreation fee account (WBS LVRDAK050000).

### **c. Environmental Justice**

Consistent with Department of Interior (DOI) and BLM priorities, the BLM GFO seeks to achieve environmental justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility and make a difference in Alaskan communities through interpretation and outreach. This includes to:

- improve public health and safety at developed recreation sites and areas by updating and modernizing infrastructure—including meeting accessibility standards for people with disabilities;
- invite education, interpretation, and recreational access for all Americans, especially for diverse populations and those near urban areas to encourage enjoyment of BLM-managed public lands and waters;
- collaborate with community members, government organizations, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to address environmental and health-related challenges for outdoor recreation;
- enhance understanding of environmental and health-related issues at the community level;
- improve methods for identifying, addressing, tracking, and measuring progress toward achieving environmental justice; and
- support youth education and outreach programs.



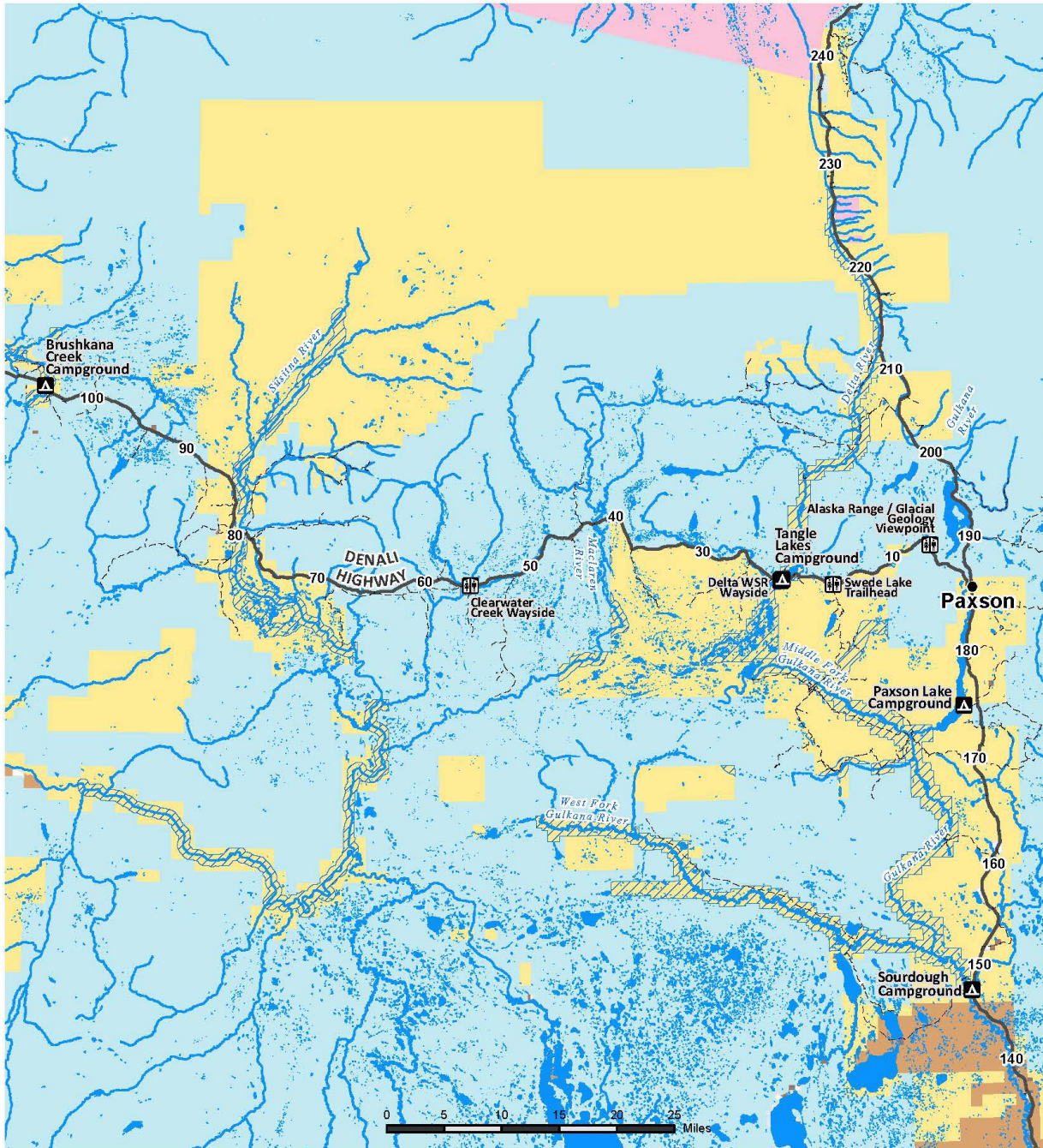
Map 1. Glennallen Field Office Campground and Wayside Locations



**Glennallen Field Office Campground and Wayside Locations**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR | BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT | ALASKA | GLENNALLEN FIELD OFFICE

4/20/2022



Campground	<b>Administered Lands</b>	Native Lands
Restroom	Bureau of Land Management	Private
Trail	Department of Defense	
Wild and Scenic River Corridor	State	
	Native Allotment	

**Disclaimer:** No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification. The information displayed on this map should be used for graphic display only. For official land status information, refer to Cadastral Survey plats, Master Title Plats, and land status case-files.



## 2. Background

### a. Area Description

This business plan describes the recreation facility fee site history, services, and financial and physical resources provided by the GFO. The field office is a part of the Anchorage District Office (ADO) which manages BLM lands located in the southern portion of Alaska. There are approximately 4.3 million acres within the BLM management boundaries of the GFO. The recreation facility program (developed sites) includes 4 campgrounds, 2 waysides, and 4 boat launches associated with the Gulkana and Delta Wild and Scenic River (WSR) corridors.

The GFO boundary extends from the southern slopes of the Alaska Range to Ketchikan, from the Talkeetna Mountains to the Wrangell Mountains. The Copper River census area covers a large area around Glennallen, including Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the largest national park in the United States. The area is bisected by the Glenn, Richardson, and Denali Highways. The Denali Highway stretches 135 miles from Paxson to Cantwell, connecting the Richardson and Parks highways. Before the Parks Highway was completed in the early 1970s, the Denali Highway was the only road access to Denali National Park. The road is mostly gravel (max speed varies from 35–55 mph depending on surface conditions), and winter conditions close the road every year from October through mid-May.

Located at the core of this area, the Copper River Basin is rural in nature with small communities and villages throughout the area. Residents of the cities of Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla, and Fairbanks utilize the area heavily for recreation as well as for sport and subsistence hunting and fishing. International visitors come to the area for a once in a lifetime recreational experience.

The GFO manages two Congressionally designated rivers within its boundaries: the Gulkana WSR and the Delta WSR. Four campgrounds and two waysides are located along the Richardson and Denali Highways. Paxson Lake Campground and Sourdough Campgrounds are the access points for trips within the Gulkana WSR. The Tangle Lakes Campground and Delta Wayside offer access to the Delta WSR.

The management area offers wide vistas of mountains in almost any direction. Visitors enjoy summer sightseeing, camping, picnicking, lake and river fishing, hunting, hiking, ATV driving, boating, berry picking and winter activities such as snow machining, snow shoeing, sledding, skiing, dog mushing, trapping, fishing, and hunting. The remote character of the area means there are fewer crowds and organized tourist companies and activities than in other areas in Alaska. This draws visitors seeking more remote and quiet forms of recreation. This area is the place many Alaskans come to recreate because of its natural character and remote attributes.

### b. Visitor Demographics

The field office boundaries lie about midway between the two most populated regions in Alaska. Most visitors to GFO recreation sites travel from their homes in Anchorage, Fairbanks, or the Matanuska-Susitna

Boroughs. Due to easy highway access to these sites, the GFO's developed sites also receive visitation from both the lower 48 states and international visitors traveling the highways.

Alaska has a population of 733,391 people with 291,247 living in the Municipality of Anchorage and 107,081 in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Anchorage is the most populous city in Alaska.

Alaska is the twelfth most diverse state in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Anchorage has a diversity index of 66.7% (United States Census Bureau, 2021), meaning it ranks in the top 15th percentile for diversity in the nation and has three of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the country, according to 2013-2014 census data.

The median household income for the Municipality of Anchorage is \$84,928 (2015-2019) with 8.3% of the population living below the poverty level. The median age is 35 (State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2021); 24% are persons under the age of 18 and 49.1% of the population is female (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Anchorage is racially composed of 63.8% Whites (non-Hispanic), 10% Asians, 9.4% Hispanic or Latinos, 9.1% American Indians or Native Alaskans, 6.0% Blacks or African Americans, 2.8% Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 8.4% of two or more races (United States Census Bureau, 2021).

In the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the median household income is \$75,493 with 8.7% living below the poverty level (United States Census Bureau, 2021). The median age in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is 36.2 (State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2021); 26.4% are under 18 years old and 48.1% of the population is female (United States Census Bureau, 2021). The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is racially composed of 82.5% Whites (non-Hispanic), 7% two or more races, 6.9% American Indians or Native Alaskans, 5.2% Hispanic or Latinos, 1.7% Asians, 1.3% Blacks or African Americans, and 0.4% Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (United States Census Bureau, 2021).

Fairbanks North Star Borough has an estimated population of 97,121. The median household income for the State of Alaska is \$72,515 (2011–2015) with 9.9% of the population living below the poverty level. The state's median age is 34 with 47% of the population being female. Alaska is racially composed of 61% Caucasians, 15% American Indians or Native Alaskans, 7% Hispanic or Latinos, 6% Asians, 4% Blacks or African Americans, and 7% others.

In 2019, Glennallen, AK had a population of 411 people with a median age of 20.5 and a median household income of \$70,781. Between 2018 and 2019 the population of Glennallen, AK grew from 289 to 411, a 42.2% increase and its median household income declined from \$77,083 to \$70,781, an 8.18% decrease.

The five largest ethnic groups in Glennallen, AK are White (non-Hispanic) (64.2%), Two or more races (30.4%), American Indian or Alaska Native (5.11%), and Asian (0.243%). 100% of the households in Glennallen, AK speak English at home as their primary language. 99.8% of the residents in Glennallen, AK are U.S. citizens. In 2019, the median property value in Glennallen, AK was \$235,600, and the homeownership rate was 57.3%.

The above data was compiled from United States Census Bureau data and State of Alaska Labor Department and Workforce Development – Research and Analysis data.

**c. Campground Fee Services Description**

The GFO campgrounds and waysides extend from Mile 147 on the Richardson Highway to mile 105 on the Denali Highway. There is a wayside at Upper Tangle Lakes, and one at Clearwater Creek.

Paxson Lake Campground has the only public dump station between Delta Junction and Glennallen. Paxson Lake is situated approximately halfway between Fairbanks and Valdez making it a popular stop over for travelers. The dump station gets heavy use during the summer from campers and other non-camping public.

*Table 1. Current Facilities and Amenities*

<b>Site</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amenities</b>	<b>Points of Interest</b>
Brushkana Creek Campground	Developed (22 sites)	MP 104.5 Denali Highway	Picnic tables, fire rings, outhouse, trash, leveled tent sites	Hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing, access to backcountry
Paxson Lake Campground	Developed (50 sites)	MP 175, Richardson Highway	Potable water outhouses, picnic tables, fire rings, leveled tent sites, improved boat ramp	Paxson Lake, Gulkana WSR floater access
Sourdough Creek Campground	Developed (45 sites)	Milepost 147.5 Richardson Highway	potable water, outhouses, picnic tables, fire rings, leveled tent sites, improved boat ramp	Gulkana River, Trans-Alaska Pipeline viewing
Tangle Lakes Campground	Developed (45 sites)	MP 21 Denali Highway	Potable water, outhouse, picnic tables, fire rings, host, trash, leveled tent sites, boat ramp	Hiking, fishing, boating. Delta WSR access, fishing, wildlife viewing, access to backcountry

i. Sourdough Creek Campground

Sourdough Creek Campground is located at MP 147.5 Richardson Highway. It was acquired by the U.S. Government through quitclaim deed from the State of Alaska in 1985 and was renovated from 1992 to 1998. The camping area became an expanded amenity fee site in 1994 when it re-opened to the public. This recreation site provides 45 campsites (including a host site and two walk-in camp sites), picnic tables and fire rings. Other amenities within the facility include six accessible double vaulted toilets, numerous bear-proof trash receptacles and food lockers, parking for vehicles and boat trailers, a paved boat launch, potable water (hauled), accessible trails, picnic areas and kiosk, and interpretive panels dispersed throughout the site. This site is mostly utilized from late May through September, the snow free season

Winter physically closes the campground to motor vehicle traffic, and it is then only reachable by foot, dog sled or snow machine. No fees are collected during this time of year.

In addition to RV and tent recreational camping opportunities, the campground provides access to the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River. Floaters use the boat launch as a put-in and take-out point as well as jet boat users in the river corridor. Activities this site supports include recreational fishing from the bank, subsistence hunting access for caribou and moose, as well as berry picking and trapping.

Image 1. Sourdough Creek Campground Map

Image 2. Sourdough Creek Campground boat launch

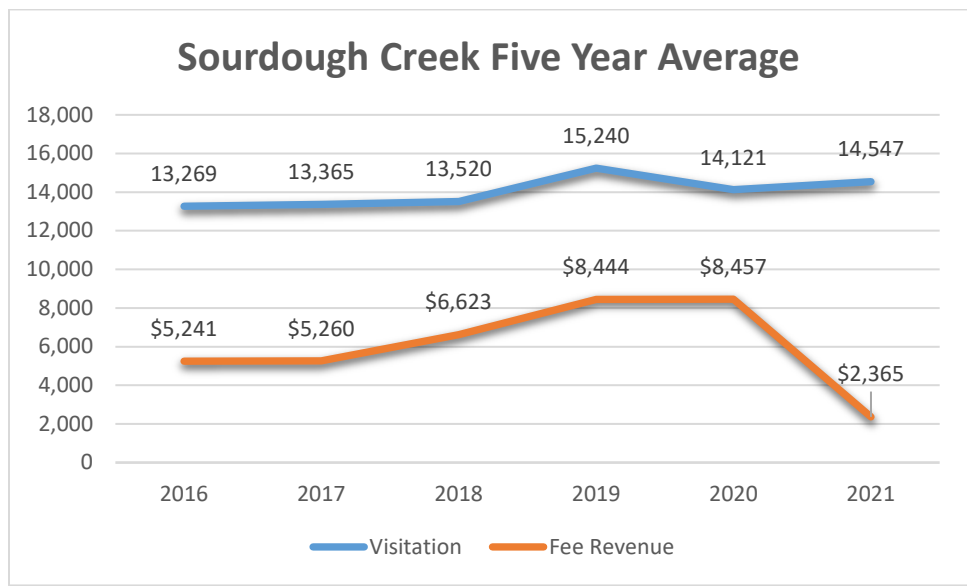


Table 2. Sourdough Creek Campground Visitation

Fiscal Year	Visits	Visitor Days	Total Revenue
2016	13,269	13,457	\$5,241
2017	13,565	13,715	\$5,260
2018	13,250	13,438	\$6,623
2019	15,420	15,315	\$8,444
2020	14,121	14,288	\$8,457
2021*	14,547	14,708	\$2,365

\*Revenue decreases due to early season Sourdough bridge closure/wash out and ongoing Richardson Highway road construction.

Graph 1. Sourdough Creek Campground Visitation Compared to Revenues



ii. Paxson Lake Campground

This campground lies within an 8,000-acre recreational withdrawal surrounding Paxson Lake. Access is at MP 175 Richardson Highway. The original campground was developed and opened to the public in 1977. Major expansion took place in 1988 and the camping area became the first expanded amenity fee site in BLM Alaska in 1993. This recreation site provides 50 campsites (including a host site, two accessible campsites, and ten walk-in campsites), with picnic tables and fire rings. Other amenities within the facility include six double-vaulted toilets (three accessible), numerous bear-proof trash receptacles and food lockers, parking for vehicles and trailers, a paved boat launch, potable water, a sanitary dump station, accessible trails, picnic

area, boater information cabin, and interpretive panels dispersed throughout the site. This site is mostly utilized during the snow free season, May through September. Winter physically closes the campground road access when it becomes only reachable by foot, dogsled, or snow machine. No fees are collected during this time of year.

Paxson Lake Campground provides RV and tent camping. It is the launch point for a four-day float down the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River. The boat launch supports recreational boating and lake fishing activities, access to remote campsites around the lake, berry picking, and the harvest of subsistence resources.

Image 3. Paxson Lake Campground map

Image 4. Paxson Lake Campground campsite

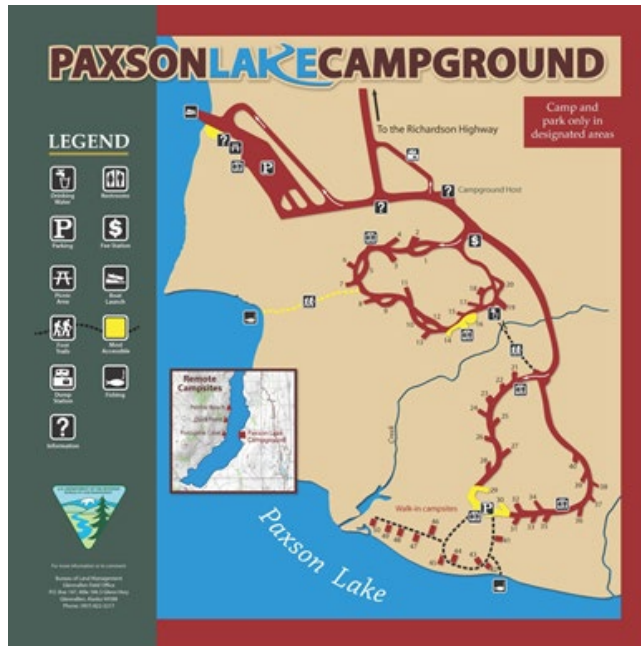


Image 5. Paxson Lake Campground Road

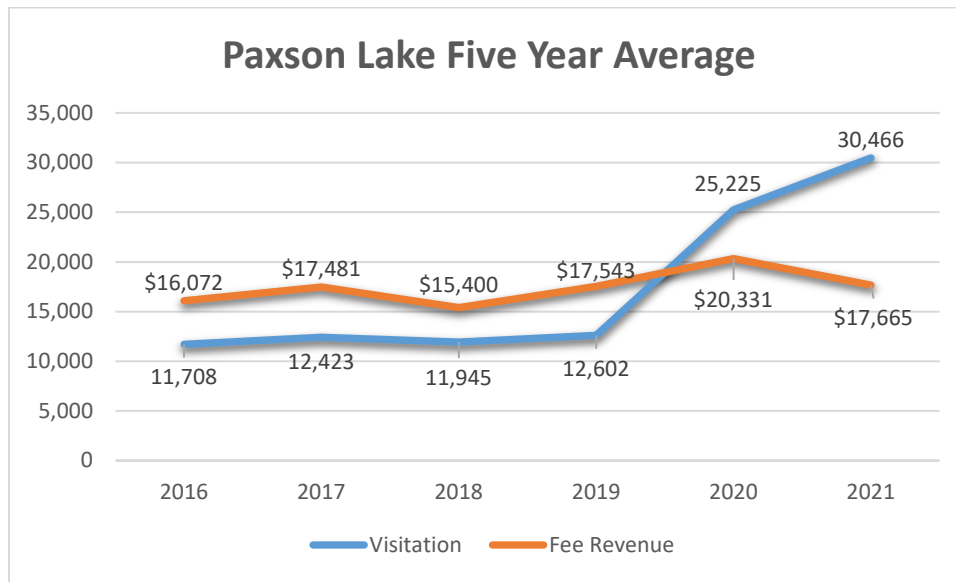


Table 3. Paxson Lake Campground Visitation

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Visitor Days</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>
<b>2016</b>	11,708	17,326	\$16,072
<b>2017</b>	12,423	18,322	\$17,481
<b>2018</b>	11,945	17,689	\$15,400
<b>2019</b>	12,602	18,589	\$17,543
<b>2020</b>	25,225	37,305	\$20,331
<b>2021</b>	30,466	45,000	\$17,665



Graph 2. Paxson Lake Campground Visitation Compared to Revenues



### iii. Tangle Lakes Campground

Tangle Lakes Campground is located at MP 21 Denali Highway. It was constructed in 1964 by the State of Alaska on State selected lands and was known as the Denali Campground. The State of Alaska relinquished the lands back to the U. S. Government in 1966. The campground now lies within the 1980 designated Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor. It has been combined with the original Tangle Lakes Campground, located to the east, whose facilities were removed. The campground became a fee site in 2012 after reconstruction and provides 45 campsites with picnic tables and fire rings, designated tent pad sites, sustainable roadways, four double vaulted accessible toilets, numerous bear-proof trash receptacles and food lockers, a paved boat launch with parking area, and potable water. There is a foot trail within the campground for a short day-hike. This site is mostly utilized during the snow free season, May through September. Winter physically closes the campground road access, and it is only reachable by dog sled or snow machine.

The campground offers rustic campsites in the foothills of the Alaska Range and provides access to the three-day canoe float on the Delta Wild and Scenic River. The lakes are used for recreational boating and fishing, are considered a prime berry picking location, and have many hiking opportunities. The area is key for subsistence and sport hunting of caribou and moose. This area is also highly used by migratory birds for nesting. The geographical features surrounding the campground show the true process of glaciers and give Tangle Lakes its definitive look.

Image 6. Tangle Lakes Campground Map



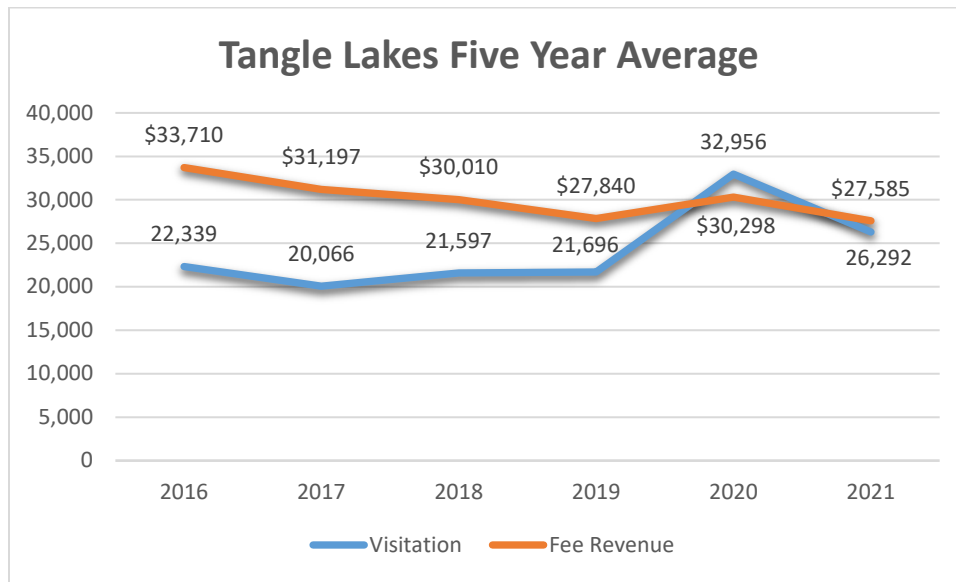
Image 7. Lower Tangle Lake and Campground



Table 4. Tangle Lakes Campground

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Visitor Days</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>
<b>2016</b>	22,339	24,118	\$33,710
<b>2017</b>	20,066	22,475	\$31,197
<b>2018</b>	21,597	24,021	\$30,010
<b>2019</b>	21,696	24,135	\$27,840
<b>2020</b>	32,956	37,623	\$30,298
<b>2021</b>	26,292	29,615	\$27,585

Graph 3. Tangle Lakes Campground Visitation Compared to Revenues



iv. Brushkana Creek Campground

Brushkana Creek Campground is located at MP 104.5 along the Denali Highway and originated in 1957, the same year that the Denali Highway was completed. The State of Alaska assumed control of the facility upon statehood in 1959 and it was quitclaim deeded back to the U. S. Government in 1966. The 22-unit camping area with fire rings and picnic tables became an expanded amenity fee site in 1997. This 47-acre facility also provides three double vaulted accessible toilets, numerous bear-proof trash receptacles and food lockers, parking for vehicles and trailers, potable water, trails, picnic area with shelter, and interpretive panels dispersed throughout the site. This site is mostly utilized during the snow free season, May through September. Winter physically closes the campground road access, and it is only reached by foot, dog sled or snowmachine.

Its location along the Denali Highway has made it a destination for travelers along the gravel road connecting Paxson to Cantwell. Brushkana Creek and Tangle Lakes Campgrounds are the only developed, public campground facilities along the 135-mile road.

Image 8. Brushkana Creek Campground Map



Image 9. Day Use area and campsite

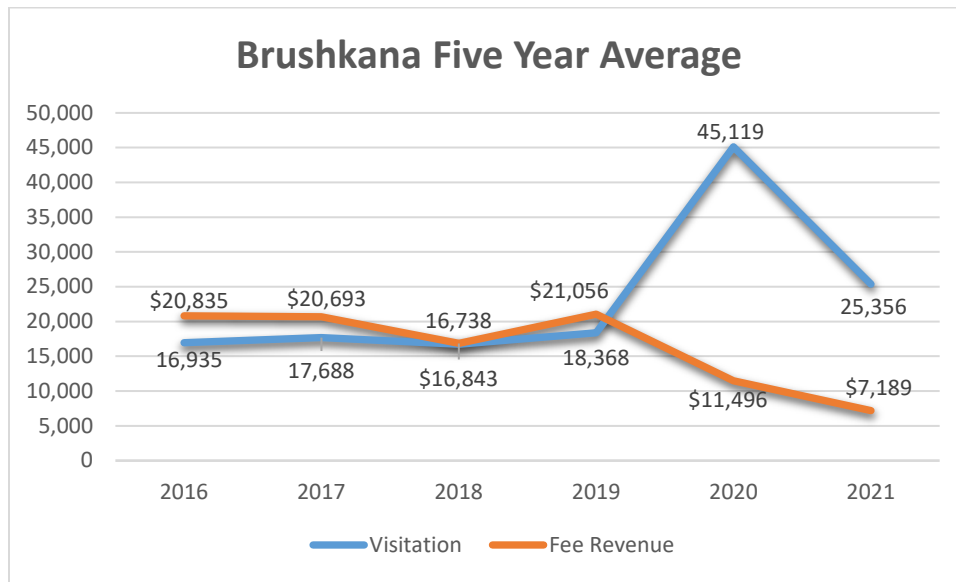


Table 5. Brushkana Creek Campground Visitation

Fiscal Year	Visits	Visitor Days	Total Revenue
2016	16,935	13,609	\$20,835
2017	17,688	14,581	\$ 20,693
2018	16,738	13,675	\$16,843
2019	18,368	14,349	\$21,056
2020	45,119	40,246	\$11,496*
2021	25,356	21,370	\$7,189*

\* Revenue drops in 2020 and 2021 are believed to be association with higher non-compliance of fee payment when no camp host was on site.

Graph 4. Brushkana Creek Campground Visitation Compared to Revenues



**d. Operating Costs**

GFO expends considerable resources in managing the BLM recreation sites and campgrounds along the Richardson and Denali Highways. The current system of waysides and campgrounds require substantial levels of facility maintenance, visitor contact, signage, staff, volunteers, and law enforcement support to maintain a presentable and safe experience for visitors. The remote location, vast distances between recreation sites, and limited access to supplies and staff add additional maintenance challenges. GFO staff available for maintenance includes two full-time outdoor recreation planners, one seasonal park ranger, several volunteer campground hosts, and law enforcement staff.

Direct costs for recreation management include BLM employees, contractors, and volunteer and intern labor. Services include restroom pumping, janitorial contracts, garbage collection, hazard tree mitigation, potable water testing, vehicle maintenance, law enforcement, signage, maintenance materials and supplies for campsites, roads and access points, brochures, and interpretive materials.

Labor is the most expensive direct cost. One full-time outdoor recreation planner is tasked with managing all aspects of site recreation across GFO boundaries. The GFO spends a significant amount of time managing recreation fee sites and non-fee sites which draw considerable visitation.

Leading staff, managing volunteer campground hosts, and developing interpretive materials are among the many duties associated with managing fee sites and developed recreation areas. A percentage of the overall recreation budget also funds engineering staff to work on deferred maintenance, facility upgrades, and new projects as needed.

Unanticipated expenditures are the biggest variable in operation costs. Water system failures, winter snow and plowing damage, and the price of fuel to transport materials to this remote region are recent examples where the BLM has used considerable recreation fee revenue and base budget funding.

*Table 6 – Labor and Supply Breakdown for Fee Site Operation\**

<b>Annual Expenditures</b>	<b>Cost (approximate)</b>
Labor-outdoor recreation Planner (3 work months)	\$33,000
Contracts-janitorial and vault toilet pumping	\$59,510
Seasonal Park Ranger GS 5	\$27,000
Seasonal Park Ranger – GS 3	\$13,500
Campground Hosts – volunteer reimbursement (4 hosts, 4 sites)	\$18,850
Materials and supplies	\$37,500
Vehicles	\$10,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$209,760</b>
Six year average annual revenue from Table 7	\$69,972
<b>Average Annual Shortfall</b>	<b>- \$139,788</b>

\*Data source 2021 Budgeted expenses

Table 6 lists anticipated costs associated with operating all GFO fee and non-fee sites along the Denali and Richardson Highways in FY23. The most unpredictable costs in this breakdown are vehicles and the associated fuel to operate them.

### **e. Recreation Use Fees and Revenues**

Sourdough Creek (initiated fees in 1994), Paxson Lake (initiated fees in 1993), Tangle Lake (initiated fees in 2012), and Brushkana Creek (initiated fees in 1997) currently collect fees in a manner consistent with the criteria listed in section 803 (b) of FLREA.

From 2016 through 2021, an estimated yearly average of 78,948 people visited GFO campgrounds (Recreation Management Information System – BLM Internal System). Visitation from North America and international locations continues to increase significantly. Clients of several tour companies now complement the growing numbers of independent travelers. Visitation trends are highly variable and influenced by several factors, including the state of the economy, fuel prices, weather, and the overall condition of the Denali and Richardson Highways.

Several reasonable explanations could account for the variability in fee revenue versus visitation numbers. When the BLM collected similar fees irrespective of the visitation, there was a consistent campground host presence throughout the summer, leading to more thorough encouragement of payment. In some seasons,

campground hosts have had intermittent presence due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather, vehicle problems, lack of recruitment, or medical issues.

*Table 7 Recreation Use Fees Revenues from 2016 to 2021*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
2016	\$76,068
2017	\$74,631
2018	\$68,867
2019	\$74,883
2020	\$70,583
2021	\$54,804
6 Year average annual revenue	\$69,972

\* Data source CBS Billing system of records of receipts.

### 3. Fee Proposal

#### a. Summary of Fee Proposal

This fee proposal includes increasing camping fees at all GFO campgrounds as well as establishing a RV Dump Station fee at Paxson Lake Campground. Table 8 below shows a summary of the proposed changes and additions.

*Table 8 – Existing and Proposed Fee Structure*

<b>Recreation Site</b>	<b>Existing Fee</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>
<b>Brushkana Creek</b>	\$12	\$15
<b>Paxson Lake</b>	\$12	\$15
<b>Paxson RV Dump Station Use Fee</b>	\$0	\$10
<b>Reservation Services</b>	\$0	\$0.50 to \$10.00
<b>Sourdough Creek</b>	\$12	\$15
<b>Tangle Lakes</b>	\$12	\$15

### i. Expanded Amenity-Reservation Services

GFO Field Office will use various e-commerce technologies, as directed in BLM Instruction Memorandum 2022-019, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve, and pay for a campsites and day use within the field office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov.

If the GFO decides to make reservation services or other types of e-commerce options available in the future, an expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be charged in addition to any other standard or expanded amenity fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). Reservation services fees could range from \$0.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service fee is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the Business Plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the traditional iron ranger with RUP envelopes will exist until the field office moves the fee area completely to e-commerce options and/or the RUP envelope is no longer available for payment.

### b. Financial Analysis

In fiscal year 2021, the GFO collected \$54,804 in recreation fee site revenue. With the proposed increase at GFO sites, the BLM estimates that GFO would collect an additional \$13,701 annually, an increase of 25%. This number assumes all visitors to the first-come, first-served campground pay the full or correct amount.

Table 9 illustrates the projected revenue if the fee increases are implemented. Revenue projections are based on the implementation of the proposed fee increases and by looking at three factors used to determine revenue: 1) total number of Recreation Use Permits (RUPS), 2) percentage of discounted RUPS, and 3) average length of stay.



Table 9 – Recreation Site Use Fee Projected Revenue

Recreation Fee Site	*RUPS Issued	*Average Length of Stay (days)	*Site Occupancy (nights)	Proposed Fee	**Total Fees	**Percent Increase in Revenue
Sourdough Creek Campground	525	1.2	630	\$15	\$9,351	24%
Paxson Lake Campground	1458	1.2	1750	\$15	\$25,982	23%
Tangle Lakes Campground	2507	1	2507	\$15	\$31,024	25%
Brushkana Creek Campground	1341	1	1341	\$15	\$16,595	25%

\*Figures are based on a six-year average (FY16-FY21)

\*\* Total assumes visitors pay the full or correct amount for every RUP

Figures are derived by multiplying the total number of RUPs by 65%, the estimated percentage of full-priced RUPs purchased. The remaining RUPs (35% of the total) involve Senior or Access passes that reduce fees by half. The GFO multiplied the number of full-priced and discounted RUPs by the average length of stay and then by the appropriate proposed fees (full-price or discounted) to determine projected revenue.

Using Sourdough Creek Campground as the example, 630 RUPs x .65 = 410 full-priced RUPs. 410 full-price RUPs x 1.2 days avg. stay/RUP = 491 days. 491 days x \$15/day = \$7,365. 630 RUPs – 410 full-price RUPs = 220 half-priced RUPs. 220 half-priced RUPs x 1.2 days avg. stay/RUP = 264 days. 264 days x \$7.50 per day = \$1,980. **\$7,365 + \$1,980 = \$9,345 projected revenue.** The projected revenue figures assume all visitors to the first-come, first-served campground pay the full or correct amount. Unfortunately, collections demonstrate that this is not always the case, so actual revenue will likely be lower than the estimates.

Currently, there is one GFO recreation site (Paxson Lake Campground) utilizing the Recreation.gov online scan and pay system. If visitors make reservations for additional sites through Recreation.gov, they will be charged a reservation service fee according to current contract for online services. This is common practice for other local, state, and federal agencies.

The GFO could not determine a conclusive future revenue formula for the Paxson Lake Campground RV dump station fee. Information is not available to determine the percent of RV campers that use the dump station while visiting. Over the years, however, BLM employees and volunteers have observed RV campers utilizing the dump station, and GFO continues to bear the cost of maintenance.

### **c. Fee Calculation**

The GFO determined the new expanded amenity fees for existing and proposed recreation fee sites by comparing its facilities to park facilities offering similar recreation activities, access, services, and amenities in Alaska. These facilities included campgrounds managed by adjacent BLM field offices as well as those managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS), Alaska State Parks, and Chugach National Forest.

All developed campgrounds within the market comparison area charge an overnight fee. These fees range from \$6 per night at more rustic and remote BLM and FWS campgrounds to \$28 per night at highly developed, urban interface Forest Service and State campgrounds.

The GFO determined the proposed fee increase directly from this analysis. The proposed fees lie within the range of other service providers' and are based on what these agencies currently charge for similar visitor facilities, access, and amenities. Although comparison to facilities with similar services and amenities was the main determining factor, the GFO also took into consideration the length of time since the GFO last raised fees, the length of time since other agencies last raised fees at their sites, the number of discounted RUPs sold, and the increased cost of maintaining and operating the recreation sites.

### **d. Use of Fees**

GFO's main goal for recreation fee sites is to provide high-quality recreation opportunities and experiences for all visitors. BLM staffing provides visitor information, conducts field patrols, provides interpretive programming, maintains facilities, collects and reconciles fees, and rehabilitates natural resource damage. BLM labor and cost of volunteer support will continue to be the highest operating cost, but less than 4% of that cost is currently funded by recreation site fee revenue.

Recreation fee revenue will continue to provide essential support for day-to-day operation of the sites. The following is an initial list of priority expenditures that recreation fee site revenue will be used for:

- Service contracts for garbage collection, septic pumping, water testing, wildland fire mitigation through brush clearing, and hazard tree mitigation;
- Supplies including but not limited to cleaning supplies, toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, fuel for motorized equipment, paint, lumber, upkeep of mechanical equipment, etc.;
- Maintain, improve, and replace recreation site infrastructure such as trails, information and interpretive signage, fire rings, picnic tables, restroom buildings, etc.;
- Government vehicles and trailers;
- Maps, brochure development and reprints, and interpretive materials;
- Volunteer campground host per diem and reimbursement for expenses.

Budget shortfalls due to emergency building and site repair, or other unforeseen events, are a frequent cause of maintenance backlogs or employee shortages. Given current reduced budget levels and uncertainty in the use of assistance agreements for labor and support, authorizing new fees and raising existing fees

would allow the field office to fill vacant positions, and continue to support the recreation sites along the Richardson and Denali Highways and visitors who use them.

Over the next five years, the GFO intends to achieve greater self-sufficiency for the recreation fee sites within the field office while recognizing that appropriated funds still provide the foundation of the recreation program. The BLM's Recreation Strategy "Connecting with Communities" provides a vision to increase and improve collaboration with the local community network of service providers. This helps communities to increase socioeconomic health and deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors, while sustaining the distinctive character of public land recreation settings.

#### i. Work and items needed at GFO campgrounds

The GFO would continue the janitorial contract, toilet pumping contract, and general maintenance repairs. Although current fees generated would not cover the costs of the upgrades/repairs, GFO anticipates being able to cover the costs through deferred maintenance funding and limited base funding. If the proposed fee modifications are implemented, GFO would gain greater self-sustaining ability to manage the continued costs of operating these sites.

Other priority items, with estimated costs, that which could be accomplished within the next five years should fees increase include the following:

- Installation of new BLM signs; \$2,500
- Repair of resource problems, including vandalized toilets, trash dumping, impacts of off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and damaged structures; \$3,200
- Update interpretive panels depicting local cultural, historical, and wildlife features. \$5,500

#### ii. Compliance and Enforcement

Recreation staff, law enforcement, and volunteer campground hosts all play a vital role in recreation fee site compliance. Campground hosts directly interface with visitors to ensure they understand payment requirements and procedures. Visitors must hang the yellow envelope stub on clips affixed to Carsonite or wooden posts at every site or on vehicle dashboards. If a host does not observe the yellow stub, visitors are handed a yellow payment envelope and are encouraged to pay. If any refusal or difficulties arise, law enforcement is notified when they drive through the campground, or by cell phone when there is coverage. Regular patrols by recreation staff and volunteers compliment this process. During the summer months, BLM personnel maintain a consistent presence at recreation sites.

Concrete-affixed Iron Ranger fee tubes are in use at all campgrounds. GFO utilizes the double-insert style of Iron Ranger. This allows for a double accountability system where the person collecting the fees only has access to the box that is swapped out and cannot gain access to the fee envelopes; only the budget personnel at the GFO has access to the fees. Campground hosts, BLM employees, and volunteers are not allowed to handle fees unless they have taken the collection officer training required through the BLM

Collection and Billing System and BLM regulations. On occasion, BLM staff and law enforcement conduct on-site compliance checks, during which fee envelopes are compared to actual site visitors to ensure payment. In 2022 GFO plans to implement the scan and pay feature through the recreation.gov website. This option will initially be offered at the Paxson Lake Campground site. Additional campgrounds are intended to be added based on ease of use of the system and cellphone coverage at sites.

### iii. Fee Discounts

Section 5 of FLREA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the America the Beautiful Pass – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. This pass provides the bearer full coverage of standard amenity fees. No sites within the Field Office charge a standard amenity fee (these are typically day use fee areas, high visitation picnic areas, etc.); the one current fee charged is for an expanded amenity. Holders of the Interagency Senior and Access passes may receive half-off of expanded amenity fees. This includes overnight camping at GFO campgrounds. No other fee discounts, passes or waivers are allowed, including the dump station fee.

## e. Impacts of Fee Changes

### i. Positive Impacts of Adopting the Proposed Fees

GFO has not changed or updated its campground fees since 2012. Since 2012, the cost of goods, labor and services have steadily increased. During this time, the Consumer Price Index has increased 26% (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics). As the costs of goods, labor, and services increase, the purchasing power from recreation fees decreases proportionately.

If the proposed fee increases were adopted, current services would continue. Some of the revenue would be used to incrementally reduce the maintenance backlog.

New projects identified in the priorities for future expenditures section would be implemented. Site infrastructure, cleanliness, and visitor services and information would also benefit. All these combined would improve the overall visitor experience.

Benefits to the local economy could also be realized. An Outdoor Industry Association study found that in 2017, outdoor recreation generated \$887 billion in consumer spending in the United States and generated \$7.3 billion in Alaska alone. It also brought in \$337 million in Alaska state and local tax revenue (<https://outdoorindustry.org/state/alaska/>). It is imperative to the local economy to keep recreation site infrastructure in good condition, clean, and serviced to high standards. Maintaining these high standards and creating new opportunities improve the overall recreational experience for current and future visitors alike.

Increased fees also benefit the natural environment. By providing trailheads, waysides, campgrounds, and day-use areas for visitors, the field office can consolidate resource impacts to a much smaller area. Human waste and garbage are dealt with in an appropriate manner in areas where sufficient infrastructure is provided. If these services were not available, illegal dumping would proliferate. Increased and new fees would allow for more purchasing power to acquire items that help reduce negative impacts to the environment.

## ii. Negative Impacts of Not Adopting the Proposed Fees

New and existing facilities represent a substantial public investment. Without a fee increase, visitors could expect to see a loss of functionality and use of these facilities as maintenance capacity will be reduced due to insufficient funding or staffing.

As costs are anticipated to increase, maintenance might not happen as quickly or as often as needed, and some services might be reduced. Deferred maintenance costs would increase as facilities age, and some facilities might not be operated at full capacity. Maintenance that is deferred because of insufficient funding might result in increased safety hazards, reduced service to the public, higher costs in the future, and inefficient operations.

Recreation demands would continue to increase if visitation increased, thus the costs to operate the fee sites and those proposed in this analysis would become more dependent on fluctuating appropriated funding. The opportunities for future planned developments would be constrained and likely set aside. The field office might have challenges implementing the BLM's Recreation Strategy. As mentioned earlier, not raising or establishing these proposed sites could lead to the erosion of services such as cleaning and maintaining the sites. If sites were not appealing to visitors, they might stop recreating in this region, thereby affecting the local economy.

Negative impacts to the environment could also occur. Fewer trash pickups and pumping of toilets could occur, creating human waste and garbage impacts. These garbage impacts could also attract wildlife such as bears, leading to negative impacts on visitors and the environment. Less frequent patrols from recreation staff to maintain trails, signage, and education materials might allow some visitors to act inappropriately by creating new trails and vandalizing facilities. If visitors began to view these sites as non-maintained, it could lead to a belief that these sites are not frequented at all and could exacerbate problems with dumping and vandalism.

## 4. Outreach

### a. Public and Stakeholder Participation

The BLM's "Connecting with Communities" recreation strategy provides a vision to increase and improve collaboration with local community service providers to help communities produce greater well-being and socioeconomic health to deliver outstanding recreation experiences to visitors while sustaining the

distinctive character of public land recreation settings. As part of this strategy, the GFO seeks engagement and partnerships with local stakeholders to accomplish mutual public access and recreation objectives. The GFO also seeks relationships with youth groups, like Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment based in Kenny Lake and the Copper River Watershed Project Stewardship Program out of Cordova, in helping to promote a positive experience for youth and to inspire them to take a greater interest in public land issues.

The BLM will continue nurturing existing partnerships and pursuing new ones that complement the agency's mission. In a fiscal environment that cannot sustain wasteful spending and program inefficiency, the agency continues to act on opportunities that will support a healthy, robust, relevant, and accountable recreation program for the public. Future priorities include increasing the number and scope of such partnerships and agreements associated with the GFO recreation program.

Draft business plans must be made available for public review and comment for a minimum of 30 days. Prior to implementing new fees, the GFO will conduct outreach efforts to notify the public of its opportunity to review and comment on the draft business plan.

The BLM will issue a press release and undertake other outreach efforts regarding the increased fee's at GFO campgrounds. This will include release to media outlets when the 30-day public comment period is announced.

The new RV dump station fee may require a federal register notice prior to implementation (scheduled for the fall of 2023).

## **b. Visitor Feedback Mechanisms**

The BLM will allow for a 30-day public review period during which the public will have the opportunity to learn about the proposal and to submit comments for consideration.

The public may submit comments on the proposed Recreation Use Fee changes by any of the following methods:

- Website: <https://www.blm.gov/office/anchorage-district-office>
- E-mail: [GlennallenFieldOffice@blm.gov](mailto:GlennallenFieldOffice@blm.gov)
- Fax: 907-822-7335 Mail: BLM Glennallen Field Office, Box 147, Glennallen, AK 99588

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix A – Fee Comparison Analysis

CAMPGROUND SERVICES AND FEES COMPARISON - 2022											
AGENCY	CAMPGROUND	STANDARD SERVICES (FLREA)			EXPANDED SERVICES						EXISTING FEES (PROPOSED)
		Sites	Drinking Water	Toilet	Host	Picnic Area	Shower	Boat Launch	Additional Developments	Overnight Sites	
Private	Nenana RV Park and Campground	45	x	V	x		x		RV Dump, Pavilion, Playground, Laundry, Wi-Fi	\$20	
Private	Tok Sourdough Campground	75	x	F	x		x		RV Dump, Pavilion, Laundry, Wi-Fi, Café	\$28	
AK State	Chena River	61	x	F	x	x		x	Pavilion/Dump Station/WiFi	\$12 walk-in/\$15 dry	
USFS	Trail River	91	x	V	x				Picnic shelter, volleyball & horseshoe area, playground	\$18	
USFS	Williwaw	60	x	V	x	x				\$18 single site/\$28 double site	
USFS	Tenderfoot	35	x	V	x			x		\$18	
USFS	Russian River	83	x	F	x	x				\$18 single site/\$28 double site	
USFS	Quartz Creek	45	x	F	x	x		x	Picnic Shelters, RV Dump	\$18 single site/\$28 double site	
AK State	Big Delta	25	x	V	x	x				\$15	
AK State	Birch Lake	19	x	V	x	x		x	1 Cabin Rental	\$15	
AK State	Red Squirrel	5	x	V		x		x		\$15	
AK State	Rosehip	37	x	V	x	x		x		\$15	
AK State	Granite Tors Trail	24	x	V	x	x		x		\$15	
AK State	Salcha River	6	x	V	x	x		x	1 Cabin Rental	\$15	
AK State	Upper Chatanika River	24	x	V				x		\$15	
AK State	Whitefish	25	x	V		x		x	Picnic Shelter	\$15	
AK State	Olnes Pond	15	x	V		x		x		\$15	
BLM	Marion Creek	27	x	V	x	x				\$10	
BLM	Brushkana	21	x	V	x					\$12	
BLM	Tangle Lakes	27	x	V	x			x		\$6 {walk-in}/\$12	
BLM	Paxson Lake	50	x	V	x			x	RV Dump	\$6 {walk-in}/\$12	

AGENCY	CAMPGROUND	STANDARD SERVICES (FLREA)			EXPANDED SERVICES					EXISTING FEES (PROPOSED)
		Sites	Drinking Water	Toilet	Host	Picnic Area	Shower	Boat Launch	Additional Developments	Overnight Sites
BLM	Sourdough Creek	42	x	V				x		\$6 {walk-in}/\$12
BLM	Cripple Creek	21	x	V						\$6
BLM	Mount Prindle	13	x	V						\$6
BLM	Ophir Creek	19	x	V				x		\$6
BLM	Eagle	16	x	V	?					\$10
BLM	Walker Fork	20	x	V	?				Picnic Shelter	\$10
USFWS	Upper Skilak Lake	25	x	V				x	RV Dump	\$10
USFWS	Hidden Lake	44	x	V				x	RV Dump	\$10
BLM	Galbraith	30		V		x				*\$0 (\$10)
BLM	Arctic Circle	12		V		x				*\$0 (\$10)
BLM	Five Mile	8	x	V		x			RV Dump	*\$0 (\$10)
BLM	West Fork	20		V						\$10

\*These sites are in the Federal Register process to become fee sites in September of 2022

V=Vault Toilet, F=Flush Toilet



## **Appendix B – Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Symbols**

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

CBS – Collection and Billing System

FBMS – Federal Business Management System

FLREA – Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act FY – Fiscal Year

GFO – Glennallen Field Office

MP – Milepost

OHV – Off-highway Vehicle

RMIS – Recreation Management Information System

RUP – Recreation Use Pass

RV – Recreational Vehicle

SO – State Office

USFS – United States Forest Service

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

WBS – Work Breakdown Structure